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MEMORANDUM FOR: [redacted]

23 December 1957

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SUBJECT : Quarterly Estimate of the Production of Aircraft
in the Sino-Soviet Bloc - July-Sept 1957

1. You probably received copies of the attached document. It is of somewhat limited interest to us since it is an estimate only of the numbers of aircraft produced in the USSR and contains no appraisal of the capabilities of new types of aircraft that have gone into production. Nevertheless, this estimate asserts that several plants which normally produce fighter or interceptor types have recently been shut down for change over to new advanced types of aircraft. Under the circumstances, I think the time may be propitious for us to collect the views of Air Force intelligence and of the appropriate CIA components on the characteristics of new types that are going into production, the date at which production starts and the rate of production, all of this aimed toward an estimate of the enemy's intercept capability with manned aircraft during the forthcoming season.

2. In connection with the above, Colonel Geary recently advised me that the Air Force estimate of prospective Russian ground-to-air missile capabilities is considerably more optimistic than that we have received from OSI. You will remember that OSI expects the Russians to have something equivalent to the Nike II with kill capability well over 70,000 feet no later than the latter part of calendar year 1958. Colonel Geary says Air Force intelligence believes this date is a good deal further away. I feel it essential that we inform ourselves promptly of the views of the several intelligence organizations and that we then try to obtain some evaluation of the views if they differ.

3. I would suggest, therefore, that you first explore informally with Air Force intelligence, OSI, and I should think ONI as well their views on both ground-to-air missiles and manned interceptor capabilities. If on the basis of such an informal approach you find a wide divergence of views we might then consult as to the best means of bringing representatives of the offices concerned together in order to obtain at least an exchange of views even if no full agreement is possible. I doubt the value or necessity for our purposes of trying to drive an agreed compromise through the National Estimates


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machinery but it is vital that we be informed of the views of the different intelligence organizations and that we know on what kind of evidence these views are based. We can then draw our own conclusions.

4. If you wish my help in this enterprise, please let me know. Alternatively, if you feel that no new inquiry is needed at this time, I would like to discuss with you the latest estimates in your possession.

Attach: CIA/RR IP-570


RICHARD M. BISSELL, JR.
Project Director

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RMB:djm

1-Addressee

2-Deputy Project Director

3-Pre. Director Chrono

4-Pre. Dir FU

5-Pre. Chrono (RI)